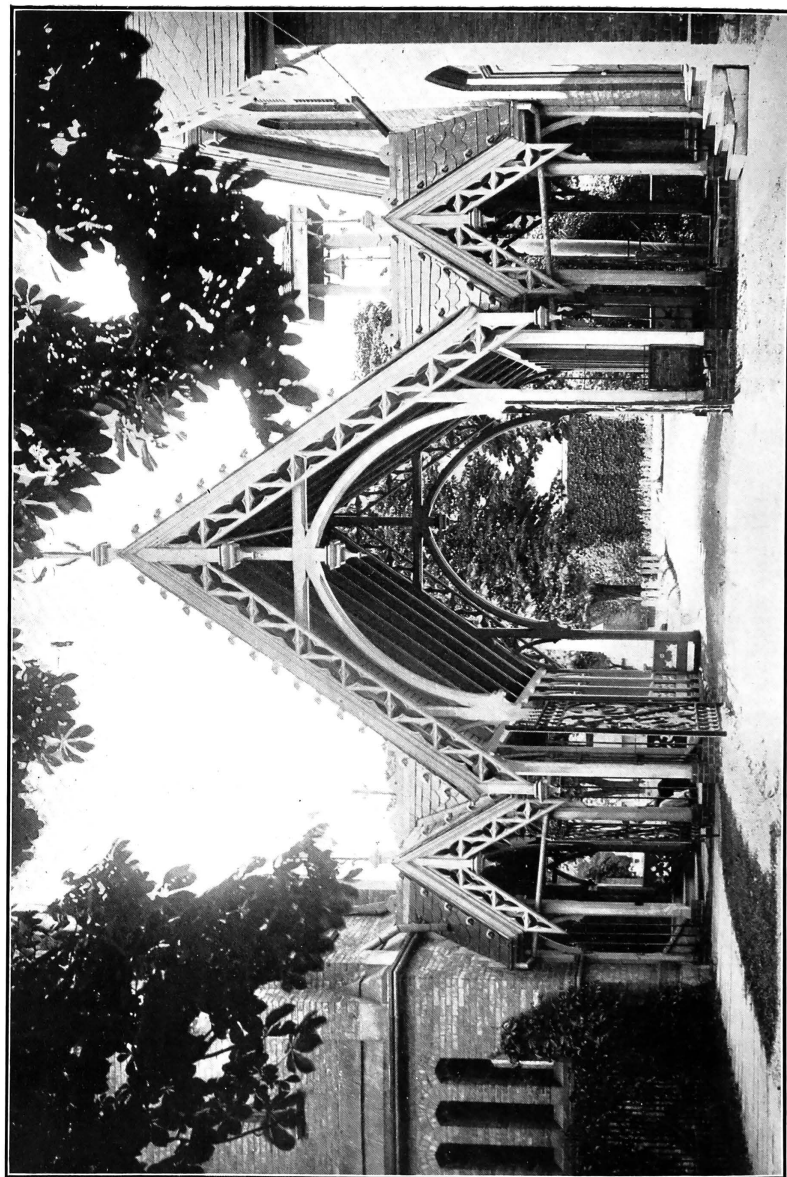


TORONTO GENERAL  
BURYING GROUNDS TRUST  
HISTORICAL SKETCH

# Historical Sketch

Toronto  
General  
Burying  
Grounds  
Trust





Main Entrance—Toronto Necropolis

**Toronto  
General Burying Grounds  
Trust**

# **Historical Sketch**

**Toronto, Canada  
1826-1905**

1905

**Board of Trustees**

D. E. THOMSON, LL.D., K.C., *Chairman*  
W. B. McMURRICH, M.A., K.C.  
JOHN HARVIE, J. P.  
J. SHORT McMASTER  
ARNOLD W. THOMAS  
WILLIAM P. GUNDY  
W. NORMAN TILLEY

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**Secretary-Treasurer**

R. S. F. McMASTER  
HEAD OFFICE ;—Medical Council Building, S. E. corner of  
Bay and Richmond Streets  
Telephone No. Main 1213

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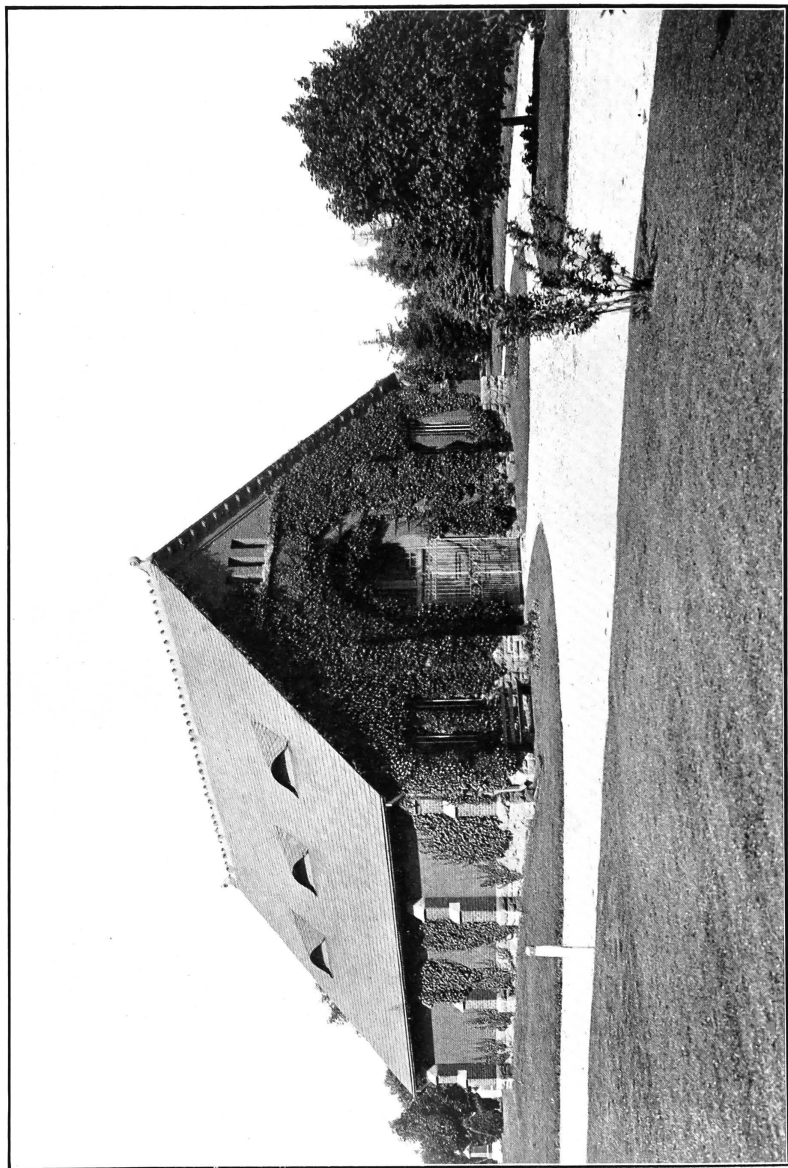
**Solicitors**

MESSRS. KERR, DAVIDSON, PATERSON  
& GRANT

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**Superintendents**

NECROPOLIS	R. POSTANS (1890)
	Telephone North 449
MOUNT PLEASANT CEMETERY	JEFFREY FOOT (1902)
	Telephone North 99
PROSPECT CEMETERY	JOHN W. PINDER (1892)
	Telephone Park 179



Receiving Vault—Prospect Cemetery

## **List of Superintendents**

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### **Necropolis**

Jas. Tolmie . . . . .	1855 to 1868
Chas. Hayden . . . . .	1868 to 1871
John Balmer . . . . .	1871 to 1889
Geo. F. Balmer . . . . .	1889 to 1890
R. Postans . . . . .	1890 to

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### **Mount Pleasant**

H. A. Engelhardt . . . . .	1873 to 1888
Bellat Lawson . . . . .	1888 to 1889
Henry Thompson . . . . .	1889 to 1902
Jeffrey Foote . . . . .	1902 to

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### **Prospect**

Richard Postans . . . . .	1889 to 1890
John Pinder . . . . .	1892 to



The Fitch Monument—Mount Pleasant Cemetery



**List of Trustees**  
OF THE  
Toronto General Burying Grounds Trust  
*From the organization of the Trust*  
*January, 1826*

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Peter Paterson . . . . .	1826 to 1849
John Ewart . . . . .	1826 to 1856
Thomas Carfrae, Jr. . . . .	1826 to 1849
Thomas D. Morrison, M.D. . . . .	1826 to 1856
Thomas Helliwell . . . . .	1826 to 1856
James Lesslie . . . . .	1849 to 1885
David Paterson . . . . .	1849 to 1856
Peter Freeland . . . . .	1849 to 1861
Hon. William McMaster . . . . .	1849 to 1887
Andrew Taylor McCord . . . . .	1856 to 1881
Thomas Dick . . . . .	1856 to 1874
Richard Yates . . . . .	1856 to 1868
John Paterson . . . . .	1856 to 1880
William Freeland . . . . .	1861 to 1865
George Hague . . . . .	1868 to 1870
Robert Walker . . . . .	1868 to 1885
John Macdonald . . . . .	1870 to 1875
James Michie . . . . .	1874 to 1883
Robert Wilkes . . . . .	1875 to 1876
Warring Kennedy . . . . .	1876 to 1904
H. E. Buchan, M.D. . . . .	1880 to 1892
D. E. Thomson, LL.D., K.C. . . . .	1881
W. B. McMurrich, M.A., K.C. . . . .	1883
John Harvie, J.P. . . . .	1885
R. Irving Walker . . . . .	1885 to 1890
John Charles Copp . . . . .	1887 to 1904
James McGee . . . . .	1890 to 1893
Ewing Buchan . . . . .	1892 to 1894
Hon. J. C. Aikens . . . . .	1894 to 1904
J. Short McMaster . . . . .	1894
Arnold W. Thomas . . . . .	1904
William P. Gundy . . . . .	1904
W. Norman Tilley . . . . .	1904



Lake and Bridge—Mount Pleasant Cemetery

## Historical Sketch

I like that ancient Saxon phrase, which calls  
The burial ground God's Acre. It is just,  
It consecrates each grave within its walls,  
And breathes a benison o'er the sleeping dust.

—Longfellow.



IT HAVING become necessary to lay before the public the new Rules and Regulations adopted by the Trustees of THE TORONTO GENERAL BURYING GROUNDS, for the management of the Cemeteries held by them in trust for the public, they deem it wise to place in historical order, the following interesting data in connection with the work of the Trust, extending now over a period of more than three quarters of a century. Indeed, the many changes in the personnel of the Board since its creation, mark, more strongly than almost anything else, how necessary it is to gather up such facts in time, ere those who have an intimate knowledge of the matters have passed away "to their quiet rest beneath the daisied sod." It is also but right that those for whose benefit this work is carried on, should know the history of the past, should be acquainted with the workings of the present, and be enabled to sympathize with the aspirations of those who are each year striving to work up to an ideal which will make our burying places what they ever should be—worthy of the living, and beautiful

resting places for the dead,—so that it may be said, “It might make one almost in love with death to be buried here.” Hallowed such grounds must always be, and surrounded they ever are with associations so sacred that irreverence cannot intrude therein. In their quiet graves are now resting many of those who gave their time and attention, willingly and ungrudgingly, as members of the Trust, and to whose sagacity, prudence, and foresight, the public are greatly indebted for the beautiful burying grounds we now possess.

We must go back to the year 1825, as our starting point, in passing in review the various operations of the Trust, and its history, from a time of “small things” up to its present magnitude; for in this year the first movement was made for a non-sectarian burying ground.

At this date there were only two religious denominations—viz., the Episcopal and Roman Catholic—who were empowered to hold ground for burial purposes, and as unreasonable difficulties very frequently arose in regard to burying strangers in what was called consecrated ground, it was thought advisable to purchase a non-sectarian and non-denominational burying ground, which would prevent any such difficulties from ever arising in the future. The project was warmly taken up by many of the citizens of the then Town of York, or better known by its familiar

title of those days, "Muddy Little York," and through their exertions an Act was passed, on the 30th day of January, 1826, on the petition of THOMAS CARFRAE, the younger, and other inhabitants of the Town of York, allowing the said petitioners, as Trustees, permission to purchase a plot of ground, for the purpose of a general burying ground for strangers, as well as for the inhabitants of the town, of whatever sect or denomination they might be, and limiting the amount of land to be so acquired to six acres in the Township of York.

Thereupon the Trustees under the Act at once purchased the six acres of land required, and named it

### ***The Potter's Field***

The land so purchased cost the Trust the sum of seventy-five pounds currency, or \$300, the whole amount being raised by subscriptions, in sums in no case exceeding one dollar; and after being fenced, was opened to the public, who largely availed themselves of it, and many of the earlier inhabitants of our City found their resting place within its precincts. The original Trustees have all passed away—they were

PETER PATERSON

JOHN EWART

THOS. CARFRAE, the younger

THOS. D. MORRISON

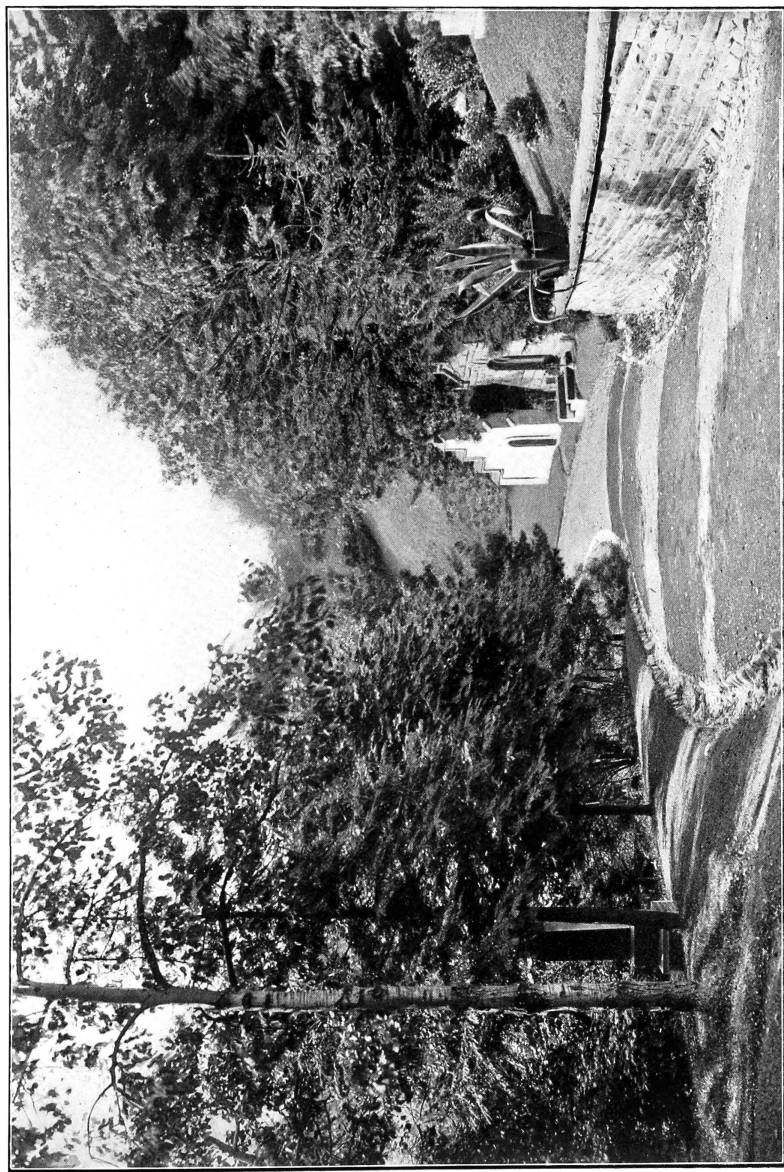
THOS. HELLIWELL

All are well-known names in the history of our City, Dr. THOS. D. MORRISON being the third Mayor of Toronto, filling the chair in the year 1836, whilst the others were leaders in the commercial pursuits and activities of the day.

Even as the original Trustees have passed away, so has the first Cemetery of the Trust—there is no longer a Potter's Field. Where the marble columns once stood, and the house to receive the departed was once erected, now stand the splendid villas of the living.

It was situated in Yorkville (now Toronto), on the north-west corner of Yonge and Bloor Streets, just outside the limits of the town as then constituted, and when purchased was considered quite in the country.

For over twenty-four years the Potter's Field was the only non-sectarian burying ground in use, and had rapidly filled up. In the meantime, however, the Village of Yorkville had sprung into existence and was fast increasing in population, while the Town of York had grown into the City of Toronto, and building had rapidly extended northward, along Yonge Street, so that it became apparent that the Cemetery of "The Potter's Field" could not, in justice to the living be continued. The Trustees, therefore, in 1849 got an Act of Parliament passed, supplemented by another



Woodbine Avenue—Mount Pleasant Cemetery

in 1851, increasing the number of Trustees to seven, and granting them power to purchase more land in the Township of York, not exceeding 25 acres.

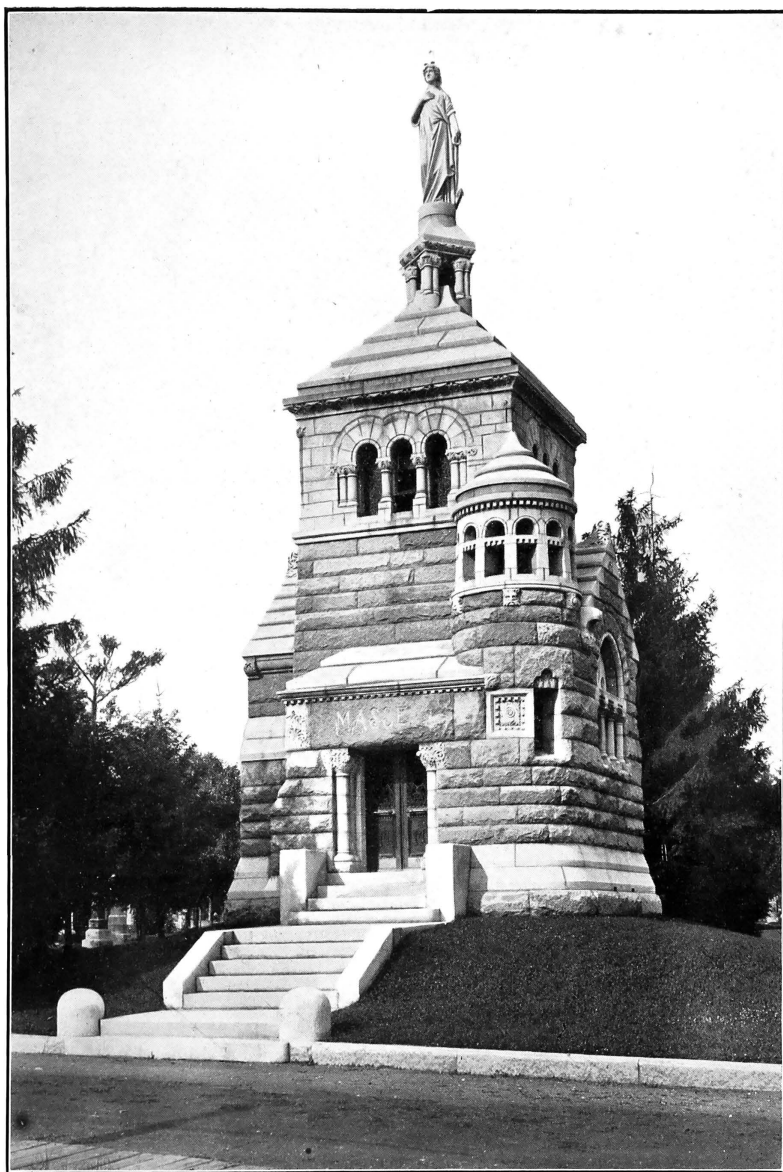
About this time, the Hon. JOHN McMURRICH, Mr. A. McGLASHAN, and Mr. JOHN SHAW, had purchased a piece of ground at the north-east portion of the City, which they opened as a non-sectarian burying ground, under the name of the "Necropolis," and the beauty of the situation as well as its attractiveness, soon led to its general use, and thus relieved the pressure on the Potter's Field. Burials, however, were still permitted there; but in 1855, the inhabitants of Yorkville, having sent in a petition to the Legislature to have the Potter's Field closed as a Cemetery, their request was granted, and an Act passed, closing it, and empowering the Trustees to sell the same as soon as the bodies were removed. From this time on, the bodies that had been interred in the Potter's Field were gradually removed by friends and relatives to the other burying grounds of the City; in every case the Trust providing equivalent accommodation in their new Cemetery, the Necropolis, to those willing to avail themselves of it. In 1874, the Legislature gave power to the Trustees to remove any remains which should not, within twenty years from the closing of the Cemetery, in 1855, be removed by relatives or friends.



This was done, and the Potter's Field finally closed, in 1875.

### **The Necropolis**

This, the oldest of the burying grounds now under the management of the Trust, was purchased from the Hon. JOHN McMURRICH, and those associated with him, for the sum of \$16,000, on the 11th July, 1855. It is worthy of note in this connection that the Trust had only available for this purchase, the sum of \$1,000, and in order to avoid any mortgage being placed on the property, which would have prevented burials therein, three members of the then Trust, namely, Messrs. WILLIAM McMASTER, DAVID PATERSON and JAMES LESSLIE, assumed the personal responsibility of paying the \$15,000 required to complete the purchase, and carry the same until the amount was discharged. The property consists of about fifteen acres of land, situated on the west bank of the River Don, north of Winchester Street, and has a commanding and picturesque position. Every advantage has been taken of the surroundings, and the natural slope of the ground towards the river has enabled beautiful terraces to be made, and lovely walks to be laid out. A neat Gothic fence surrounds the property, the main entrance to which is from Winchester Street. On the right of the entrance is the Superintendent's house and office, while on the left



Massey Mausoleum—Mount Pleasant Cemetery

is the chapel, a very ornamental building, where service can, if necessary, be held. Immediately facing the entrance is the Mortuary vault.

The original extent of the Necropolis soon proved too contracted to supply the wants of a rapidly-increasing City, and to meet this difficulty the Trustees, in 1864, purchased from the City the ground adjoining on the south side of Winchester Street, for the sum of \$5,314. They at once proceeded to prepare the land so acquired for the purpose of interments, and much labor and money were expended thereon. A fence, similar to that around the Necropolis, was built, the land drained, the grounds opened, and a few interments made. Just at this period, however, those living in the vicinity protested against any enlargement of the Necropolis, and petitioned the City Council to have it turned into a Park. The City Council having agreed to this, the Corporation, by virtue of an Act passed in the year 1871, re-purchased the lands from the Trustees; and it is now known as Riverdale Park, one of the most attractive Parks owned by the City and the home of the "Zoo."

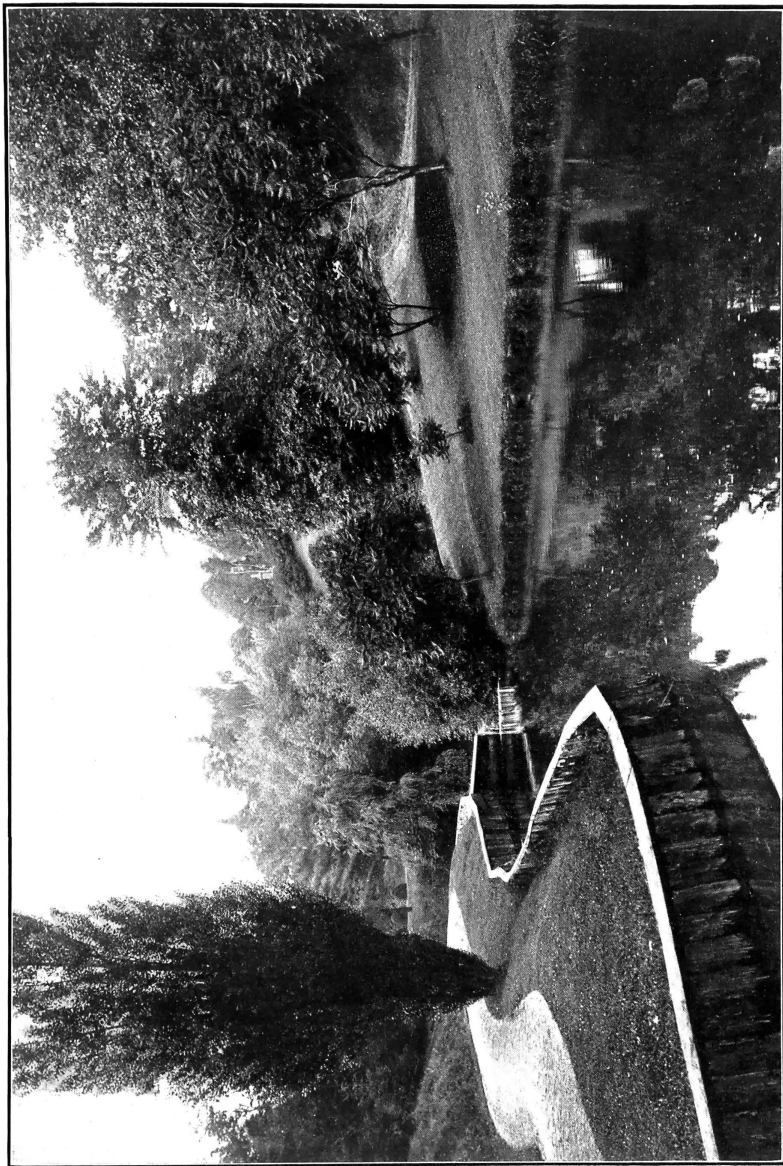
The short period of thirty-seven years has been sufficient to fill the Necropolis with its silent inhabitants, and but few lots remain unsold. A ramble through this Cemetery recalls, at almost

every step, reminiscences of the past. On stone after stone we read the names of those who, in their day, occupied foremost places in the City, in every walk of life.

### **Mount Pleasant Cemetery**

It being impossible to enlarge the boundaries of the Necropolis; by virtue of the amending Act of 1871, giving power to acquire additional land, the Trustees, after some deliberation, decided to purchase the property now known by the above name, and in 1873 they became the owners of the two hundred acres, at a cost of \$20,000. This acreage has since been increased, some fifty-three additional acres, lying alongside, having been purchased, in 1883, at a cost of \$15,000.

No time was lost after the original purchase was made in getting the grounds into shape: Plans were prepared, a handsome fence erected around the property, walks and drives laid out, bridges built, a commodious vault erected; all at a cost of over \$40,000. These improvements were begun in the Spring of 1874, but it was not until July, 1875, that the grounds were in a condition to be used for burial purposes. The Cemetery was formally opened to the public on the 4th day of November, 1876. No special ceremony was held, but the Hon. WM. McMASTER, with the Board of Trustees, met the Citizens on the



Front Ravine—Mount Pleasant Cemetery

ground, and a pleasant afternoon was spent in surveying the improvements then made, and listening to the views of the members of the Trust in regard to what was to be done thereafter. The burden of the work, both as to the designing, engineering, laying out, and superintending, was laid on the shoulders of the then Superintendent, Mr. H. A. ENGELHARDT, and it was generally admitted that he had done his work well and in good taste.

The grounds have a frontage on Yonge Street of 1,320 feet, and extend eastward to the Second Concession of the Township of York, a distance of one and a quarter miles—level table-land alternating with hill and dale, while miniature lakes, waterfalls, and running creeks, lend their additional charms. Substantial roads have been constructed, extending many miles throughout the Cemetery and affording ready access to any part of it.

Shortly after the purchase of Prospect Cemetery—hereinafter referred to—the Trustees sold the fifty-three acres above referred to and in November, 1889, a further sale of  $10\frac{1}{2}$  acres on the east end of the Cemetery was made. The fifty-three acres, however, subsequently reverted to the Trust. To these lands have since been added about eight acres situated to the west thereof, and embracing both sides of a beautiful ravine. A portion of

these latter lands has during the past year been laid out by Mr. Joseph Earnshaw, C.E., of Cincinnati, U.S.—below mentioned—and will shortly be opened for burial purposes.

The original large receiving vault that had been built at considerable cost on the opening of this Cemetery, situate opposite the north entrance to the grounds facing Yonge Street, was discovered, during the summer of 1892, to be in a very unsafe condition.

The Board called in at once the services of the late Mr. W. G. Storm, Architect. He, having reported the vault unsafe, was asked to submit plans for the erection of a new one. His death on the 11th August, 1892, prevented this being done, and the work was placed in the hands of Mr. E. Burke, Architect, who submitted plans for vault, with conservatory, chapel and forcing houses, which were approved. The work was duly entered upon and completed in June, 1893, at a cost of \$22,390, giving the Cemetery a receiving vault, chapel and conservatory surpassed by very few cemeteries on the Continent. During this same year the Belt line railway expropriated land along one of the ravines at the back of the Cemetery, and during the following year paid the Board the sum of \$10,000 damages therefor.

When the property was originally acquired, the Superintendent's house stood on the west side



Brook Avenue—Mount Pleasant Cemetery



of Yonge Street; but since then the Board has erected a substantial dwelling house for his use at the south-west corner of the grounds, and the offices of the Cemetery at the north entrance to the grounds.

About 75 acres have been laid out in burial lots, and another 25 acres will be ready for use during this coming summer. That already in use has been rapidly taken up, and with its many handsome monuments, presents a pleasing and interesting view. No fences are allowed around the lots, marble corner-posts, on a level with the sod, alone marking the boundaries, thus securing not only uniformity over the ground, but allowing them to be kept in better order than they otherwise could be.

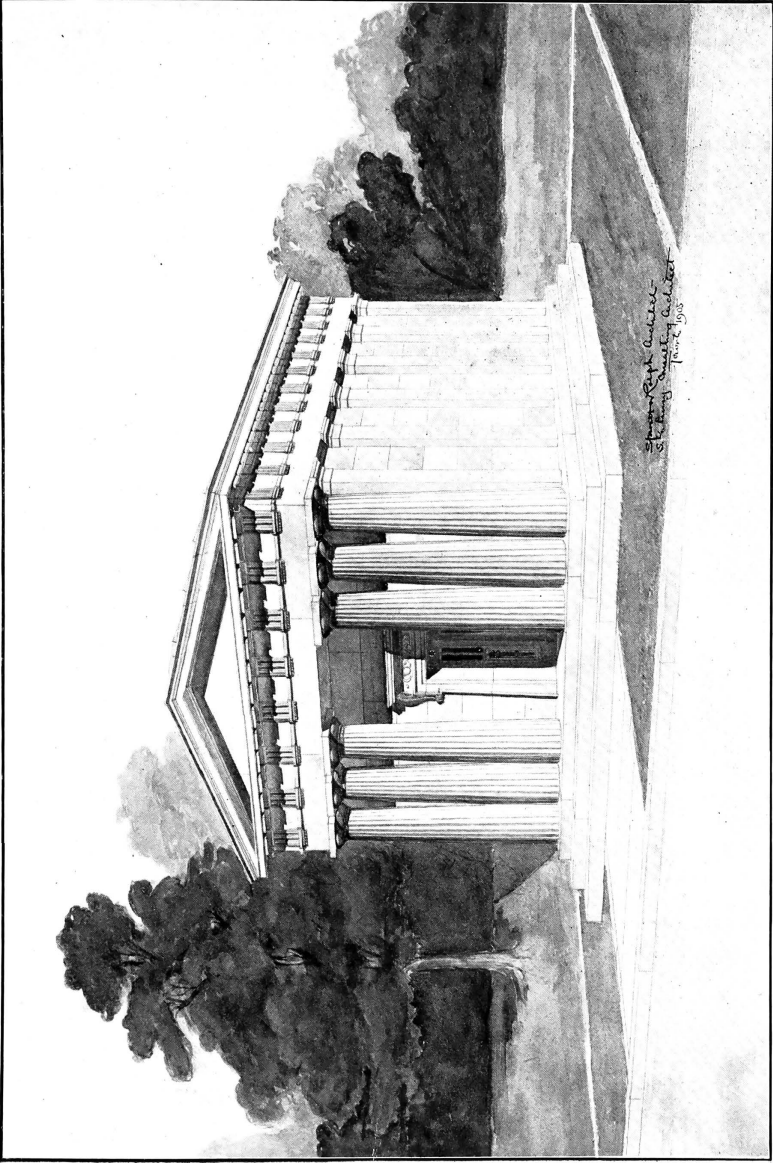
### **Prospect Cemetery**

The rapid growth of the City, especially to the westward, induced the Trustees, some eighteen years ago, to secure additional land in this direction, which resulted in the purchase of the property now known as THE PROSPECT CEMETERY, on the 13th December, 1887. Up to the time the Trustees took possession, it was used as farm lands, and extensive alterations and improvements had to be made to render it suitable for the purposes for which it was purchased.

It is situated on St. Clair Avenue—immediately to the north of the Davenport Road—and over-

looking one of the most picturesque valleys in the vicinity of Toronto. Looking southward and westward from the rising ground in the Cemetery, the Lake for miles can be seen, and the valley of the Humber, with an immense extent of beautifully-wooded land extending away to the distant horizon. The grounds are undulating and well adapted for landscape gardening and ornamentation, and contain 105 acres of land, purchased at a cost of \$29,040.

The Trustees wishing to take every advantage of the natural beauties of the ground, decided in the early part of the year 1889 to secure the services of Mr. Joseph Earnshaw, C.E., of Cincinnati, U.S., to lay out the grounds, a task which he completed in the summer of the same year, not only to the satisfaction of the Board, but in a manner that added to the reputation already acquired by him of being foremost in this department of work on the continent. When the trees provided by the planting plan grow to maturity, there is but little doubt that Prospect Cemetery will rank as the first, in point of beauty and situation, of the three Cemeteries of the Trust. The handsome Mortuary which now adorns the grounds was designed by the late Mr. W. G. Storm, Architect, and was commenced in November, 1889, and completed in May, 1890. It is built of red brick, with stone ornamentation and abutments, and is



The Cox Mausoleum—Mount Pleasant Cemetery

in harmony with all its surroundings. The Cemetery was opened for interments on the 15th May, 1890.

These valuable properties (The Necropolis, Mount Pleasant Cemetery and Prospect Cemetery) now under the control of the Board, are the fruit of the foresight, prudence and labor of gentlemen who, seventy-eight years ago, purchased, in the public interest, the property which was known as The Potter's Field, for the small sum of \$300.





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